to change the roost on the subsequent night. The newly selected roost is always on another plant, but within the garden. They keep changing the location during the following nights until satisfied with the fresh one.

Other noteworthy observations are:

a) In spite of roosting in close proximity of human habitations, they never use man made structures for the purpose.
b) The adults roosted much closer to the ground, approximately 2 m, whereas after being accompanied by the fledgling the roost was always beyond 3 m, mostly about 4 m from the ground.
c) They tolerate house sparrows at quite a close distance.
d) They refuse to abandon their roost even if they realize that the observer is watching them.
e) Mosquitoes were noticed parasitizing on the sleeping birds.
f) In the morning, the birds leave the roost just before it gets bright i.e. the same time when the house sparrows start getting restless and noisy.
g) Firecrackers had little effect on the birds as they continued to occupy the site during Diwali festival.

From the above observations it is clear that a medium sized tree with low horizontal branches e.g. *Pongamia pinnata*, *Butea monosperma*, *Ficus hispida* or a shrub like *Adhatoda vasica* or *Ixora* sp. is all that is required to attract birds even in crowded cities like Mumbai. Just as it is vital to study the diurnal habits of various fauna, understanding their nocturnal habits, if not more, is equally essential for devising appropriate conservation strategies. The survival of every species is dependent on a proper blend of its adaptation to the geographical cycles of winter and summer, day and night. The common tailorbirds in my garden have accentuated just that.

With the help of the BNHS, I intend to ring these birds in order to monitor their roosting/ breeding behaviour in the coming year.

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20. SIGHT RECORDS OF CRIMSON SUNBIRD *AETHOPYGA SIPARAJA* IN ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN

The crimson sunbird *Aethopyga siparaja* has been recorded in the Himalayas west to Kangra in Himachal Pradesh (Ripley 1982). During the winters of 1999-2000 and 2000-2001, I observed this species at Islamabad, Pakistan, far to the west of its hitherto known range and the first records for this country, apparently.

The first observation was one juvenile/ eclipse male *Aethopyga siparaja*, seen for about 15 min, at about 15 m range, through 10 x 50 binoculars, at 1000 hrs on December 11, 1999 in an Islamabad garden (Sector G 6/4), feeding from eucalyptus flowers. The bird appeared uniform dark olive-green above, uniform yellowish-olive green below (perhaps slightly more yellow towards the belly), with a dull reddish-pink chin and throat (not extending to breast). No evident eyebrow, and dark eye prominent on an otherwise plain face. No ashy or grey tinge on either upperparts or underparts. No yellow was noticed on the rump, nor any white tips to tail feathers, which was short and

square-cut with no graduation. The bill appeared longer and more prominent than in Mrs. Gould's sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae*. The bird called often, a short "tzip". In spite of keeping a lookout, it was not seen again in the winter of 1999-2000.

I identified this bird as a juvenile male *Aethopyga siparaja*, based primarily on (i) the reddish throat, which I believe is not shown by any other South Asian *Aethopyga* in either female, juvenile or eclipse plumage; (ii) lack of any grey tinge above or below, uniform yellowish-green underparts and no noticeable yellow on the rump, which excludes A. *gouldiae* and *A. saturata*; (iii) lack of prominent white tips to tail feathers, which excludes *A. gouldiae* and *A. nipalensis*; and square-cut, not graduated tail, which excludes *A. nipalensis*. Female/juvenile male *A. ignicauda*, in my experience, usually shows some orange or red in the tail.

The species reappeared in winter 2000-2001 in the same locality, with at least four individuals present in the area. It was first seen on January 3, 2001, one juvenile/eclipse male similar to the 1999 bird. Between then and February 4, four different birds were seen, one long tailed male; one juvenile/eclipse male showing extensive bright red chin, throat and 'shoulders' (lesser wing coverts); another juvenile/eclipse male (the first one mentioned above) with duller red chin and throat and no red on 'shoulders'; and a female, with uniform yellowish-olive underparts and no red at all. Twos or singles were seen frequently through February, then less frequently in March with my last record (an adult long-tailed male) on March 26, 2001. Some mutual antagonism (territorial? sexual?) was noted on several occasions, e.g. one bird flying out, calling in flight, to chase another that appeared nearby. The birds were active throughout the winter day, and were seen feeding on remnant flowers of bottlebrush *Callistemon*, and *Eucalyptus*, and catching insects in flight. They were quite vocal, and apart from the distinctive "tzip", also called "tzip-ip-ip" or "chit-chit-chwe". A subdued song (subsong?) was heard on a couple of occasions, prolonged and continuous over two or three minutes, comprising a mixture of the rapidly repeated call notes alternated with short bouts of warbling or chirruping, rather sparrow-like in tone and character.

On January 25, three birds — the long tailed male, the juvenile/eclipse male with red shoulders and the female — were together in a leafless *Broussonetia papyrifera* (introduced paper mulberry) tree with the two males showing apparent antagonistic behaviour towards each other, cocking their tails, raising their beaks to show off the scarlet on their chests and 'singing' at each other. Seen through binoculars at close range (under 10 m), the long-tailed male was noted to be in moult. The chin, throat and breast were largely bright scarlet, but some olive-green feathers remained on either side of the lower throat and sides of face, and the mantle showed an admixture of crimson and green feathers. The purple malar stripes had developed, and the yellow rump was visible when the bird cocked its tail. Tail moult appeared complete, with fresh iridescent green central tail feathers, and iridescent green patches were visible on the forecrown. Similarly, the short tailed juvenile/eclipse male with red 'shoulders' also showed a few iridescent green feathers on the forecrown and scarlet patches on the sides of the breast. By mid-February, both these features were much more pronounced and extensive, but the tail was still short. Seen again closely on March 11, a long-tailed male had apparently completed moult and was in fine plumage.

I am familiar with all five South Asian *Aethopyga* sunbird species, in India, Nepal and Bhutan. The observations in 2001 confirm the identification of the species beyond doubt.

Mrs. Gould's sunbird *Aethopyga gouldiae*, which normally occurs west to the Sutlej Valley in Himachal Pradesh, has appeared as a wanderer in winter in the Islamabad neighbourhood

(Roberts 1992). The only other sunbird species recorded in Pakistan is the purple sunbird *Nectarinia asiatica*, a summer visitor to the Islamabad area. It had arrived in Islamabad by early March 2001, and for almost three weeks, both species could be seen in the same general area. No mutual interaction was noted between the two species. As far as I am aware, there are no previous records of the crimson sunbird from Pakistan.

Seasonal movements of nectar-feeding birds have been recorded in literature, and the wandering of *A. gouldiae* far to the west of its usual range is probably explainable by the paucity of flowering plants in winter in the western Himalayan foothills. Islamabad, with its large variety of planted exotics, may be attractive to nectar-feeders for this reason. But the records of *A. siparaja* over two winters in Islamabad may indicate that the species has begun to winter regularly in the area, and possibly even have expanded its breeding range to the adjacent Margalla ravines or Murree foothills where suitable habitat is certainly available.

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21. FOLIAGE-DEW BATHING IN ORIENTAL WHITE-EYE *ZOSTEROPS PALPEBROSUS*, FAMILY ZOSTEROPIDAE

Birds have been seen to employ a variety of methods for body-maintenance including bathing and anting. Bathing is defined as any of a variety of stereotyped movements by birds to wet (and/or dust) their feathers (Ehrlich *et al.* 1994). Bathing is a common phenomenon and is believed to help allay itching, remove parasites and clean feathers, which require considerably more care than hair or skin, due to their structural complexity and importance for birds (Welty and Baptista 1988). Birds have been seen to bathe in dust, snow, sunlight, rain and water. In passerines, bathing is characteristically hurried, with continuous movement, usually in water and rain (Welty and Baptista 1988). Five types of bathing have been listed for passerines: i. splashing while standing in shallow water, ii. hopping in and out of water, iii. dipping down from flight (into stagnant or moving water) thus splashing water over their moving body, iv. bathing in the rain and lastly, v. shuffling about amongst wet vegetation (Freethy 1982). The last type seems to be rare and we report our observation on the oriental white-eye *Zosterops palpebrosus* (Temminck) indulging in this kind of bathing.

At the Forest Research Institute, Dehra Dun, November 1999, we observed a flock of about 25 oriental white-eyes bathing in the moisture on vegetation at 0900 hrs. In November, night temperature falls to nearly 10 °C and, in the mornings, much of the vegetation is covered with dew. The birds were seen to rush into the top-most branches of small-leafed shrubs by turn. They would brush vigorously against the vegetation to make the water fall upon them, and go into bouts of vigorous shaking accompanied